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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9950
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 0410
RUEHKK/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY 1404
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA PRIORITY 0979
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY 0847

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 000477

SIPDIS

KINSHASA FOR BRAZZAVILLE
YAOUNDA FOR MALABO

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/25/2017
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TP](#)
SUBJECT: SAO TOME: POST-SCRIPT TO POLICE MUTINY

REF: A. LIBREVILLE 0450
[1](#)B. LIBREVILLE 0466

Classified By: Poloff Leslie Doumbia for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) In the aftermath of the latest incident involving a group of mutinous police officers known as the "Ninjas", the government of Sao Tome released details of an agreement reached with the group October 18. The agreement disbands and dismisses the Ninjas. However, it also meets their questionable demands for back pay and poses no other penalties. The mutiny, subsequent negotiations, and varied reactions of government officials highlight the fragile nature of STP,s fledgling democracy. END SUMMARY.

Let,s Make a Deal

[1](#)2. (C) The GSTP and a group of dissident police officers known as the "Ninjas" negotiated an agreement after the second mutiny by the group in as many weeks (reftels). The Ninjas, who reoccupied the national police headquarters on October 17, put down their weapons in the early morning hours of October 18. An agreement was reached only after lengthy negotiations with the Ninjas and much wrangling within the GSTP.

[1](#)3. (U) According to the agreement, the government will pay back pay that the Ninjas claimed they are owed for a period of training in Angola and grant amnesty to all involved in the mutiny. In return, all of the dissident police officers will be dismissed and put on a type of probation. If they are ever involved in another mutinous or criminal act, the agreement asserts, they will be prosecuted.

Good Cop, Bad Cop?

[1](#)4. (C) Some in the government believed that the agreement was too lenient. On October 18, having just reviewed and approved the draft agreement, Minister of Defense Oscar Sousa told CDA and DATT that his forces had been prepared to &bombard8 the mutineers. He was very reluctant to grant concessions to the mutineers, Sousa added. However, other political players, notably the Speaker of the Parliament

Francisco Silva, intervened, negotiated a settlement, and persuaded the government to accept it.

¶5. (C) The defense minister's perspective was not shared by Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos dos Anjos. The Foreign Minister said that despite the widespread criticism of the government for granting such concessions to the Ninjas, there would have been an even greater outcry if any of the Ninjas had been killed in suppressing their actions. Dos Anjos also acknowledged that the GSTP had been criticized for granting concessions to the "Buffalos", a more formidable group of former mercenaries involved in a coup attempt in 2003.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) At minimum, this incident points to confusion and weakness within the government of STP. STP is a young but real democracy facing significant growing pains. These difficulties are exacerbated by rising prices and bare government coffers. The government has also demonstrated a worrisome willingness to negotiate with people who take up arms to express their grievances. END COMMENT.
HOLT